

# ORANGE COUNTY



Photos by HARRY FISHER

Protesters assemble in front of the federal building in Santa Ana in rally against immigration policy.

## Deported Boy Leads 300 in Protest of INS

By G.M. BUSH, Times Staff Writer

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Mario Moreno-Lopez, the 14-year-old boy mistakenly deported last month by immigration officials, led about 300 chanting demonstrators on a mile-long march in Santa Ana on Saturday to protest federal immigration policies and condemn legislation pending in Congress.

The demonstrators, many of them carrying banners or picket signs, gathered in El Salvador Park on Civic Center Drive shortly before 3 p.m. and waited for Mario to get off work to lead them to the Civic Center federal building. The crowd moved slowly along the narrow sidewalks, at times spilling out into the street.

Most of the demonstrators were Latinos,

some from as far away as Riverside and San Diego counties. They had come to protest Mario's deportation and to voice their opposition to the Simpson-Mazzoli bill now before Congress, which would restructure federal immigration policies.

"Today is my sabbath, but I cannot rest until all people have the same rights that I enjoy," Rabbi Henri E. Front told the demonstrators at the rally in front of the nine-story federal building on Santa Ana Boulevard.

Front, a member of the Orange County Human Relations Commission, said his people "broke their backs with the short hoe in Egypt 4,000 years ago," a reference to

an illegal agricultural tool sometimes used by Latino farm workers.

"We are all tired and weary and disgusted with the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service)," he said, adding, "There must be some changes."

Front called on "all good people" to stand up and speak out against what he termed injustices, such as Mario's deportation.

Echoing his plea was Anita del Rio, head of the League of United Latin American Citizens. "This law is unjust, not only to Hispanics but to all people," she said, speaking first in Spanish and then English.

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She then urged her listeners to pressure their "padrones" (employers) to contact their representatives in Congress to oppose the Simpson-Mazzoli legislation.

Sadie Reid, the only black member of the Santa Ana Unified School District's Board of Education, told the audience that minorities "have to stand together" and that she plans to meet with Rep. Jerry Patterson (D-Garden Grove) to seek his opposition to the proposed federal legislation.

"Every child must feel free and have the opportunity to go to school and to work and not be harassed," she said, with applause from the crowd drowning out her final words.

Since Mario's return to the United States, he has enrolled as an eighth-grade student at Spurgeon Intermediate School in Santa Ana and has obtained a part-time job at a supermarket.

Before the march, the youth said he was glad to have the opportunity to attend school and work at the same time. At the post-march rally, the seemingly shy youngster, when

urged to speak by the crowd, simply thanked them for their support and asked them to continue fighting for their rights.

One placard that struck a responsive note in the crowd read, "Will your child be next?"

Another attempted to taunt immigration officials: "I don't have any ID. Do you want me, INS?" It was posted on the back of a wheelchair belonging to quadriplegic John Rangel, 43, of Orange. Noting that Mario was in this country legally when he was deported on Feb. 15 because he was not carrying his alien registration card, Rangel, a U.S. citizen, said many Mexican-Americans find themselves in a



Maria Ibarra leads demonstrators in a chant at federal building.

perpetual predicament, not fitting into the mainstream of either American or Mexican society.

"It's like we're constantly sitting on a fence; we don't really belong anywhere," he said. "When we go to Mexico, they tell us, 'You're American.' And here they never stop reminding us that we're Mexicans."

## Bill's Provisions Called Unjust

Rangel called provisions of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill "unjust," especially one that would require all aliens to present an identification card to prospective employers.

"That would affect people of Mexican descent who are born

here," said Rudy Escalante, head of the American GI Forum. "It would only serve to force employers to discriminate against anyone who may not speak the language fluently and who doesn't have the ID card."

Escalante called another provision of Simpson-Mazzoli—that would offer amnesty to illegal aliens who have been in this country for a specific length of time—a ruse. "It's just a smoke screen to cover up a denial of rights," he said.

He added that there is a "double standard for thousands of Canadians holding jobs in this country. No one ever says anything to them or about them. We need fair immigration laws that are not based on race."